

No. 12 / September 2021, Cologne
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Cologne trade fair logistics made to measure: eSlot sustainably improves trade fair traffic situation

Koelnmesse provides exhibitors and logistics companies with planning reliability and time savings for deliveries and departures

Good accessibility, sustainability and efficiency in the handling of trade fair traffic during set-up and dismantling periods, which has long seemed like a vision of the future, will become reality during the autumn trade fair season in Cologne. The entirely new, dynamic, logistics management system eSlot will be introduced for the trade fair duo FSB and aquanale (26 to 29 October 2021). With eSlot, logistics companies, forwarding agents and exhibitors will register all their logistics traffic for trade fair set-up and dismantling activities in advance, instead of driving onto the trade fair grounds unannounced, as was previously the case. "From now on, we will have a comprehensive overview of the logistics situation for our trade fairs in advance. This opens up entirely new possibilities for traffic control and logistics management," says Chief Financial Officer of Koelnmesse, Herbert Marner. The system enables the trade fair's traffic planners to distribute trucks and vehicles efficiently in terms of time and space, to balance out delivery traffic, to achieve higher throughput rates, and to avoid waiting times and backlogs on site. It will also help significantly reduce pollutant emissions on the right bank of the Rhine in Cologne.

Exhibitors and logistics companies will greatly benefit from the improved predictability, flexibility and time savings eSlot provides. Following successful pre-registration in the system, vehicles are routed directly to the precise loading and unloading point on the day itself via the NUNAV navigation app. By dynamically adjusting the booked time slots for loading and unloading in interaction with NUNAV, the traffic situation is adapted in real time as resources become available. The system automatically assigns new slots to customers. If this is not possible, the trucks are routed to the Koelnmesse Logistics Centre, where they are cued for entry. This brings Koelnmesse a significant step closer to just-in-time logistics and eliminates waiting times, which posed an annoyingly high cost factor for exhibitors in the past. Booking an eSlot is obligatory to access the Koelnmesse trade fair grounds during set-up and dismantling.

"It was our goal and our mission to make traffic and logistics around our trade fair grounds more efficient and fluid using the new possibilities of digitalisation, thus achieving sustainable mobility that is both environmentally friendly and economically efficient," Marner continues. By introducing dynamic logistics management, Koelnmesse is closing the final gap on its path to digitalising the entire trade fair logistics process.



aquanale
26.10. - 29.10.2021



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26.10. - 29.10.2021

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This was preceded by the introduction of innovative digital navigation via app. The NUNAV routing technology developed by Graphmasters GmbH uses swarm intelligence to assign an individual route to each vehicle. This enables routing models that go far beyond the conventional "shortest route" method employed by standard navigation systems and serve to actively avoid congestion. The system not only guides the driver to one of Koelnmesse's ten gates, but rather directly to a predefined loading/unloading point.

The dynamic LED signage completed at the beginning of 2021 in the area surrounding the trade fair is another important factor contributing to optimised routing and logistics processes. Among other things, 21 dynamic signposts have been replaced by cutting edge digital models. Simultaneous integration of digital signage (e.g. on motorways) both within and surrounding the city has created the largest traffic guidance system in the vicinity of an inner-city trade fair company, which accesses both its own signposts and other systems in the city and the surrounding area. By connecting eSlot to the navigation app NUNAV and Koelnmesse's digitalised traffic management system, all data for controlling traffic movement now converge in real time and enable ongoing balancing of supply and demand.

The traffic management digitalisation measures are supported and promoted by the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure as part of its "Digitalisation of Municipal Transport Systems" initiative.

About Koelnmesse:

Koelnmesse employs around 1000 people. As a city trade fair in the heart of Europe, it occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, with almost 400,000 m² of hall and outdoor space, is among the top ten largest trade fair grounds in the world. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and special events in Cologne and in the most important markets all over the world. Its portfolio reaches over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and around three million visitors from more than 200 nations. Until 2034, Koelnmesse is investing more than 700 million euro in the development of the trade fair grounds into the most extensive investment programme in its history, to allow it to cover all event formats in the future.

Photo material for Koelnmesse:

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